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Housekeepers' Chat

Tuesday, July 22, 1930

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Fall Gardens -- How to Have a Supply of Fresh Vegetables for Fall and Early Winter Use," Information from W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "The City Home Garden."

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The other day I made a call on W. R. B., the Garden Advisor. With fall days coming on, and early winter, it behooves us to see about a supply of fresh vegetables before it is too late.

Of course, I know that fall gardens are largely a matter of finishing what was started in the spring. Before we planted our spring gardens we had the land plowed or spaded, then we grew the early crops, and when they were gone, some of us allowed the land to grow a crop of weeds. Soil that will grow weeds will also grow lettuce and radishes -- as W. R. B. would probably tell us.

I called on W. R. B. bright and early in the morning -- so bright and so early, in fact, that he had not yet eaten breakfast.

"What ho?" I greeted him. "Is this the way you take your setting-up exercises?"

"Oh, it's you!" said W.R.B. "You can think of the most outlandish hours to call on your friends! Sure -- this is the way I get my morning exercise. Mrs. B. often accuses me of being something of a garden crank, especially when it comes to working in the garden before breakfast, and planting all sorts of new and queer vegetables. One thing certain, though -- she always knows she can find me somewhere in Garden No. 1 or Garden No. 2 when the breakfast bell rings. As a rule, she doesn't have to ring the bell more than once."

"What crops," I asked W.R.B., "would you recommend for planting in the late summer and early fall garden?"

"Depends," replied W.R.B., "upon where you are located. Good old-fashioned turnips can be grown almost anywhere in the country. The date of planting them varies somewhat; in the northern part of the country they should be planted right now. In the South, turnips can be planted as late as the middle of September, and make an excellent crop before Jack Frost interferes. It is now rather late in most sections for planting celery, unless you may have been able to have some well grown plants ready to set in the garden. Now, is the time to plant late tomatoes throughout the central and southern portion of the country.

"If you were to ask a Chinaman what to plant, he would probably suggest fall or winter radishes. If you are at all fond of radishes, get a packet of seed of the Chinese Winter Scarlet, or the White Chinese, and plant a section of row,

30 or 40 feet in length. This will furnish enough of these delicious radishes to use all through the fall, with some left over to store in moist sand for use during the winter. The Chinaman would also tell you to plant WONG BOK, which is just his way of saying Chinese cabbage.

"Don't forget to start plenty of lettuce for fall use. Make 2 or 3 sowings, so that you may have a continual supply during the fall months. Not all varieties of lettuce are good for fall planting. The Salamander has compact heads, and is one of the most heat-resistant; Big Boston is another of the standard varieties that may be grown during the fall months. Hanson is another variety of head lettuce that stands the heat quite well. If you are fond of the loose-headed lettuce, try Early Curled Simpson; while this is a spring lettuce, it often gives very fair results when planted late in the season.

"The latter part of July is not too late for planting a few snap beans. In many parts of the country, especially south of the Mason and Dixon Line, and even in some sections north of this line, snap beans can still be ~~ma~~matured before frost. Plenty of fall beans, carrots, beets, and even tomatoes can still be grown in the southern part of the country.

"It is a strange thing," continued W.R.B., "but plants seem to have sense; that is, they know when it is getting late in the season of the year, and they hasten their maturity before frost catches them. This seeming instinct on the part of plants is due to the shortening of the days, and the lengthening of the period of darkness, incident to the approach of the fall season. That is why late planted sweet corn will mature in a shorter period than when it is planted in the early springtime. The same is true of beans, of tomatoes, and of all of the crops that form seed during the season that they are planted. Turnips, beets, carrots, cabbage, and certain crops that do not form seed the season that they are planted, but hold over and produce their seed next spring, are in no hurry. They just take their time, but, on the other hand, these crops are highly resistant to cold, and may go on growing for weeks after the first frost, so the gardener is perfectly safe in taking a chance on planting them rather late in the season."

"Isn't it a lot of work to spade up the ground and to get it all ready to plant these late crops?" I asked W.R.B.

"No," he replied, "in fact, if the soil has not become too weedy, or very much packed, it shouldn't be spaded or plowed at all, because the spading or plowing loosens it too much and makes it dry out. If you do turn it over in order to get rid of weeds, then by all means roll, harrow, rake, and pack it, until it is again reasonably firm, before you plant your seeds. It is a good plan to work the soil, then let it have a good rain, or give it a heavy watering before you plant any seeds. If the ground is dry when you plant the seeds, it is a good plan to open the furrows and thoroughly sprinkle the soil in the bottom of these furrows with water before you drop the seeds. Then, if you will cover them with the drier soil, and pack it firmly over the seeds, either by means of the back of the hoe, or by placing a board over the row and walking upon it, you will form a moisture contact between the seeds and the particles of soil, and in so doing you are pretty sure to get a stand of plants. Whatever you do, don't neglect to cultivate and work around the plants just as soon as they are up. There is more to cultivation than just having a weedless garden, and, as I have said before in answer to your questions, Aunt Sammy, the best time to work in the garden is early in the morning or late in the evening. I want to suggest, however, that it isn't a good plan to cultivate certain crops, like beans or tomatoes, when the foliage is wet with dew or rain. They should be worked while

they are dry, but the early morning is a splendid time to pull weeds, or to plant any kind of seed.

"When it comes to setting plants in the garden, they should be planted late in the evening, so that they will have the night to recuperate. If you are setting plants in dry soil, don't fail to **pour** a half pint or a pint of water around the roots of each plant before you fill in the soil about them. There really is no excuse for letting the garden go to weeds after the early spring crops are gathered. It means some work to tend the late summer and fall crops, but they pay big dividends."

"What about late flowers in the flower garden?" I asked W.R.B.

"Too long a story for this time, Aunt Sammy," said W.R.B. "There's the breakfast bell -- won't you join us?"

"Don't mind if I do," I said -- not explaining that I'd already eaten a snack, before leaving home. For Mrs. W.R.B.'s breakfasts are not to be ignored -- especially when she makes light and fluffy biscuits. Don't you admire a person who can make real biscuits?

Before long, I'll see what W.R.B. has to say about flowers.

Wednesday: "Is Quarreling Necessary?"

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